

Gobble Gobble, Richie by insatiablegaydesire

Category: IT (Movies - Muschietti), IT - Stephen King

Genre: Banter, Comedian!Richie, Crack Treated Seriously, Domestic Fluff, Eddie Kaspbrak Lives, Eddie and Richie adopt a pet turkey, F/M, Fix-It, Fluff, Gay Eddie Kaspbrak, Gay Richie Tozier, LISTEN! I know this sounds fucking crazy. but its sweet okay. its v soft and it makes me emo., M/M, Pennywise exists but he is only mentioned, RiskAnalyst!Eddie, Stanley Uris Lives, Thanksgiving, benverly stanpat and bike are background but also v fucking cute, follows eddie and richie from when they were kids to present day, includes references to seussical the musical, stanpat are pregnant with twins like they deserve, the timeline flips back and forth between pre-adoption and post-adoption, turkeys are a motif

Language: English

Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Mike Hanlon, Patricia Blum Uris, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris, and a few ocs including the one and only adopted pet turkey gertrude mcfuzz

Relationships: Ben Hanscom/Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough/Mike Hanlon, Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier, Patricia Blum Uris/Stanley Uris

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Summary:

Richie has a weird lifelong love of turkeys. Eddie is just along for the ride, until he's not, and then they find themselves adopting a pet turkey named Gertrude McFuzz in LA of all places.

A look at Richie and Eddie from 1988 to 2020, following their love of turkeys and their love for each other.

Gobble Gobble, Richie

Author's Note:

Dedicated to: everyone in the Shark Puppy songwriting discord who saw me spamming messages about wild turkeys in Maine (where I live) and how Richie has definitely tried to seduce one and then encouraged me when I actually wrote the fic

my tumblr is @sapphicsansastark

May 1988

“Look at all those chickens!” Richie gestured out grandly with both of his arms spread wide, fingertips pointing at the thirty-plus-and-counting birds that had gathered in his front yard and called his friends upon to witness. The animals stiffened at his volume but otherwise remained unbothered. Bill, Stan, and Eddie, on the other hand, fully cringed at Richie’s outburst.

“Those are turkeys, dumbass,” Stan said with an unimpressed shake of his head.

“Turkeys? My mom doesn’t let me eat turkey, says the medicine farmers give them will make me stop growing.” Eddie glanced out nervously at the creatures, grasping for the inhaler in his fanny pack. One bird pecked near Richie’s foot before waddling away in disinterest, off to find seeds elsewhere. Eddie’s grip on the zipper only loosened when the turkey reached the beginning of Richie’s driveway.

“Why would we eat these beautiful beasts? How *dare* you suggest such a thing, Eddie Spaghetti. I’m flabbergasted, utterly shocked!” Richie’s Southern Belle voice was atrocious to everybody’s ears, but

seeing as they had lived in the same boring as shit New England town their whole lives, no one appreciated the full scope of the failure. Unfortunately, he quickly changed to an even worse Australian accent. “Look! There one goes, what a beautiful specimen, what I would give to see it fly.”

“Do turkeys even fly?” Eddie asked. He kicked out a foot hesitantly at one who stepped too close.

“I d-don’t know,” Bill said, wrinkling his nose. “They have wings, but so d-do p-penguins, and they can’t f-fly.”

“Only one way to find out!” Richie ran screaming into the flock of turkeys, sending them scattering in all directions on their stubby little legs. “Hm. Guess not.”

“What would we do without your astounding genius, Rich,” Eddie said flatly.

“Probably stay home alone and cry out of complete boredom.”

Eddie smiled at that, and the pair’s eyes stayed locked for a moment before Richie suddenly bolted, back into the endless turkey pit and all of its chaos.

“Run, my ladies! *Run!*”

The three were left cackling as Richie chased the birds into the trees.

August 2018

Eddie folded his work blazer lengthwise before draping it on the back of a kitchen chair. It had been a hassle to convince his firm to let him leave early, considering he had only had the job for a few months and they were severely understaffed, but if Eddie knew how to do one thing after everything he'd been through in the first forty years of his life, it was to fight for what he wanted. An hour long debate with his boss later, and he made it home by one in the afternoon. Sometimes, being a stubborn asshole with a loyal heart paid off.

He opened the fridge and poured himself a glass of water, then peeked through the sliding glass deck doors into the backyard. The pool was cleaned, the bushes were trimmed, and the fenced-in, shaded coop was... empty.

“Babe, have you seen Gertrude?”

“What?” Richie’s yell traveled across the house, his booming voice bouncing off the walls until it reached Eddie’s ears.

“I said,” Eddie repeated, raising his voice so that it traveled farther, “have you seen Gertrude?”

“WHAT?”

The chandelier above Eddie's head shook ever so slightly from Richie's scream, sending Eddie's eyes sky high in prayer that the crystal wouldn't fall. When it remained, he breathed a sigh of relief. The last thing he needed today was a broken ten thousand dollar light piece in the middle of the foyer floor.

"Jesus fucking Christ...." Eddie marched up the stairs to their master bedroom just in time to see Richie manhandling a pink and white polka-dotted sweater onto their pet turkey Gertrude McFuzz.

"Oh, there she is. I couldn't find her in her yard-- *What* the hell are you putting on her?" Eddie gaped at the sight, eyebrows screwed up in disbelief.

"Gift from Aunt Bev. It's her first birthday, remember?" Richie glanced up at him disapprovingly (*as if he would forget, psh*) before finally getting the sweater completely over Gertrude's body.

"Of course I remember, asshole. But we live in LA, she'll overheat with all that wool on."

"Ah, c'mon, Eds, it's cotton! And we'll keep her inside, turn up the AC a little bit. Plus, doesn't she look so cute?" Richie gently turned Gertrude's head so she looked up toward Eddie, her eyes wide and brown as they stared out from above a mess of baby pink. Richie's over-exaggerated puppy dog eyes didn't help the situation, his head propped up right on top of hers in a very effective way to up the cute factor.

"Yeah, okay, she does," Eddie relented with a sigh. He squatted down

and reached out a hand for Gertrude to inspect, which she did so gladly and with many excited wing flaps. “Did Bev design it?”

“Of course. Only the best and most expensive designer name sweaters for our little Trudy. It even comes with special wing holes, measured for custom fit.”

Gertrude fluffed up her brown speckled wing feathers in response.

“Bev really is the best.” Eddie stood up, loosening the tie from his neck with a wince. “When is everyone coming over for the party?”

“Bill gets in at 2, the rest around 3. They all should be here by 5, and the SNL gang said they’ll be here about 6. Everyone else will just wander in I guess. Oh! John Mulaney got back to me, said he thinks he should be able to stop by.”

“Sounds good. The pea cake come?”

“Yeah, it’s in the freezer now.”

Eddie nodded; in this weather, Gertrude always preferred her food cold. “I need to shower before everyone gets here, can you handle everything for now?”

“Aw, Eds, showering without me?” Richie grinned slyly in a way that paired oddly with a full-sized farm bird in a pink sweater tucked

underneath his chin.

Eddie considered this as he began to unbutton his shirt. "If you can put Gertrude back outside--without the sweater on--and come back up here in two minutes, I *might* let you join."

Richie jumped up, Gertude in arm, almost tripping over the rug as his foot caught on the edge. "Aye, aye, cap'n. The wind in my sails are aplenty, and I shall return as quick as the tide."

"It takes twelve hours for the tide to return."

Richie opened his mouth, then without saying a word, sprinted down the hallway and toward the stairs, Gertrude bouncing in his arms with every stride.

Eddie laughed until the ridiculous pair disappeared down the stairs, and then he laughed some more at the thought of Richie attempting to wrangle Gertrude out of that sweater in a horny rage.

Richie ended up making it with twenty seven seconds to spare.

July 1990

"Hey, Eddie! I think I'm finally getting somewhere with this smoking hot chick."

Eddie shook his head, pursing his lips at the sight before him. “She doesn’t want you, Rich, give it up.”

“Oh c’mon! Who could resist *this*?” Richie bent his legs at the knees and circled his hips, clucking strangely in the direction of the turkey he was trying to woo.

“You’re a fucking idiot. That’s not even what turkeys sound like.”

“Oh, so you know better? Hey Stan! What do turkeys sound like?”

Stan looked up from where he was sitting on Mike’s front porch, trying to clean Mike’s dad’s old pair of binoculars so that he could go bird watching with the others. Mike sat next to him, his arms folded over his legs. “What do I look like, the turkey expert?”

“You like birds, turkeys are birds,” Richie said.

Stan scoffed in offense. “I like *most* birds. Turkeys and geese are inferior birds.”

“I second that,” Bev said from Stan’s side. The two fist bumped in solidarity, Richie watching them with disgust.

“Wow, guys. I can’t believe you’re being so rude to my girlfriend Helena right now.”

“Your *girlfriend* ?” Eddie said, incredulous. He crossed his arms over his body, kicking a gravel pebble from Mike’s driveway in Richie’s direction.

“Yeah, you got a problem with that? It’s the era of free love, baby, and I *love* this turkey.”

All six of the other Losers groaned in disgust.

“Not like that, you perverts!”

“So you j-just want to k-kiss the turkey and stuff? Not sure that’s much b-better.” Bill grimaced at the thought of it.

“Hey, at least no one else has to kiss Richie then,” Stan said. Bill reached across Mike’s lap to high-five him.

“You guys are no fun. I’m sure Ben supports my love!” Richie turned eagerly to the most considerate of the friend group, his eyes blown wide behind his glasses in unblinking hope. He urged Ben to speak with a hand outstretched in expectation.

Meanwhile, Ben wilted underneath the cold stone stares of all his friends, Bev’s having an especially icy effect. He glanced at all of them once more before settling his gaze on his knees. “Sorry, Richie.”

“Wow, Benjibjab. That hurts. Truly hurts.” Richie gasped in air, his eyes wide, grasping his chest in mock pain. “I think-I think I’m dying!”

“Just go back to seducing your turkey, Rich,” Eddie said, patting Richie on the back to stop his fake coughs. The rest of the Losers rolled their eyes in unison, but Eddie ignored them, preferring to keep his own eyes straight ahead.

“Glad to have your support, Eds.”

“Oh, I’m not supporting you, I just want you to stop having fake heart attacks. You don’t even know the correct symptoms, which, really, is annoying in its own way. And don’t call me Eds.”

“Fair enough.” Richie turned his attention back to the turkey, walking up to her with his arms pulled up at his sides to imitate flapping wings. “C’mere pretty lady, *cluhcluhcluhk !*”

Eddie stared at the repeat of the bizarre mating ritual, one eyebrow raised still in silent judgement. “You know, you might want to try going after someone in your own species first. Probably have better luck.”

A shit eating grin grew on Richie’s face until the bottoms of his frames dug into the tops of his cheeks. “You setting me up, Eddie Spaghetti? Or asking me out yourself?”

“Shut up, asshole, you know what I meant.” Eddie blushed, the heat of it intensifying under the summer sun.

Richie shrugged and pulled his glasses forward. “Thanks for the offer, but I’ll stay chasing these pretty ladies for now. I think I’m really starting to connect with this one.”

The turkey in question suddenly nipped at Richie’s calves, sending him jumping up with a screech. “ *Ow*, Helena! That is *not* something I’m into!”

November 2018

“Richie, where are the eggs?”

“Have you checked the fridge?”

“Are you--yes I’ve checked the fridge, dumbass.”

“No, not the *fridge* fridge, the garage fridge.”

“When did we get a garage fridge?”

“Thought it would be a good investment.”

“Who the fuck keeps food in the garage?”

“Uh, everyone’s grandmother? From the Depression era?”

“Hey, it’s not my fucking fault I grew up without any grandparents.”

“Okay, fine, *I’ll* check the garage fridge. Just go back to whatever you’re doing with... all that.” Richie surveyed the mess on their kitchen island: two onions, a lonesome stalk of celery, one apple, a bowl of what looked like cubed bread, and a gigantic pile of spices from parsley to cinnamon.

“I’m making stuffing.”

“Of course.” Richie didn’t look convinced.

“What, you’ve never seen stuffing before?”

Richie had definitely seen stuffing before; his mom used to make it for Thanksgiving all the time. “Nope, I guess not.”

Before Richie could go and grab the eggs from the garage, though, the doorbell rang. “Damn, how are they already here?”

“My stuffing! I don’t have time to finish it.” Eddie stared at the ingredients before him, eyes wide in distress.

“Don’t worry babe. We’ll be just fine without it, promise.”

Richie left Eddie with a kiss to the forehead and walked over to the front door, opening it to six beaming faces. “Ben! Bev! Stan! Patty! Mike! Bill! You made it!”

“And with six pies to boot,” Mike said.

“Well how the fuck did that happen?”

“Some dumbasses decided not to plan out in advance who was bringing what,” Patty said, her hand held over her bulging belly of third trimester twins.

“Huh. Couldn’t have been me!” Richie stepped aside from the open door, waving his hand dramatically to beckon them in.

Eddie appeared then, a stained kitchen towel thrown over his right shoulder and his brows drawn together in worry. “You need anything Patty? A hot water bottle, a blanket?”

“You really know absolutely nothing about pregnant women, do you?” Stan said.

“Okay, I’m gay, fuck off.”

“Oh, is this your official coming out? Congrats, man.”

Eddie took the kitchen towel off his shoulder and snapped it at Stan, who grabbed it out of his hands and held it above his head.

“Sweetheart, give the man his towel.” Stan immediately complied with Patty’s request, sending her a sheepish look. “And Eddie, thank you for the offers. But I’m fine. For the future though, where’s the bathroom nearest to your kitchen? I’m convinced these brats know exactly what they’re doing when they kick my bladder five times in a row.”

“Here, let me show you.” Eddie left the towel with Richie and led Patty around the corner.

“Well, folks,” Richie said, using the towel to smack Ben’s ass. “Welcome back to our abode. You all know where the bathroom is. The kitchen, over there, same as last time. And we keep our lube and condoms in our bedside drawer, if anyone needs a quickie during this wholesome family holiday.”

“Careful, we might take you up on that offer,” Bev said, patting Ben’s bicep.

“Oh, please do. Ben, having sex in my very own bed? A dream come true. I’ll be thinking about it for months. I won’t even wash the sheets.”

“Beep beep, Richie.” Ben smiled, though a bit painfully, a blush spreading across the tops of his cheeks.

“So! Six pies! Who all brought what?”

“Well, I brought a pumpkin and a pecan,” Mike started. “Ben and Bev also brought pumpkin and a coconut cream, Stan and Patty brought a lemon cream, and Bill brought an apple pie from the Whole Foods down the road.”

“Jesus, you make it sound like I committed a murder,” Bill said, wincing.

“You brought a store bought pie to Thanksgiving. You didn’t even just buy a store bought crust and then make your own filling. There’s still a price sticker on that thing, man.”

“Hey, not all of us can be a fantastic baker with homemade recipes from their even more fantastic baker grandmother.”

Mike gave in and smiled like he always did when it came to Bill. “You sure do know how to sweet talk a man though.”

Richie cleared his throat with a loud and obviously exaggerated “*ahem*.”

Mike and Bill broke their stare to turn to him.

“So, can we move this to the kitchen, lovebirds?”

“Let’s go.” Bev led the way, Ben trailing right behind her, the other Losers behind him.

Eddie and Patty joined them in the kitchen right as they had finished placing all the pies on the counter.

“Jesus, that’s a lot of pies.” Eddie took the aluminum foil off of the one closest to him, revealing the lemon cream pie that Stan and Patty had brought. “Are we sure we can eat this all?”

“Well, considering we have no actual Thanksgiving food besides these, I’d say it’s definitely possible,” Richie said.

“Wait, you guys didn’t make anything?” Ben looked between the two of them.

“We didn’t have time,” Eddie said at the same time Richie said, “We were kind of busy.”

“So what I’m hearing is you guys were too busy fucking to make us dinner,” Stan said, causing Patty to slap his side lightly with the back of her hand.

“Okay, well, grab whatever slices of pie you want, I guess.” Eddie passed around the plates and gestured to where they kept the silverware. Before long, everyone was seated at the table with a few different kinds of pies in front of each of them.

“So!” Bill rubbed his hands together. “Where’s the turkey? You guys got that, at least. We can’t just eat pie for dinner.”

Richie paused in raising his fork to his mouth, a piece of rubbery day-old apple pie dangling precariously in the air. “Billiam, you did *not* just say that.”

“Where’s the turkey? Where’s the fucking turkey? Are you serious right now?” Eddie looked prepared to jump the table and fight Bill himself, right in front of his slices of the two pumpkin pies.

“What?” Bill looked around the table and met eight faces all painted with disbelief.

Just then, Gertrude waddled into the kitchen, letting out a loud squawk when she realized they had company, among which was her favorite human being on the planet, Beverly Hanscom.

All faces returned to Bill. “Oh. Right. Gertrude is a turkey.”

“You forgot Gertrude was a turkey?” Stan squinted at him as he

slowly chewed a bite of lemon cream.

“Well, no, I just didn’t really make the connection.”

“So you knew Gertrude was a turkey, saw no turkey on the table, and still wondered why there was no turkey for dinner?”

“Yes.”

The whole table burst into laughter.

“Damn, Bill, how did you ever sell a novel with a brain like that?” Stan asked.

“He probably has ghostwriters writing them for him,” Mike quipped.

“Yeah, like Richie,” Ben said.

“Um, excuse me, *not* like Richie. My ghost writers wrote way worse jokes than I do, check the reviews. Bill’s ghostwriters make his ideas seem decent, which is a miracle straight from God.”

“I bet you can’t even tell a good joke right now, Tozier.” Bill pointed his fork in Richie’s direction, the prongs less than a foot from touching his face.

“Oh, yeah? Well... what did the dimwit say to the turkey?”

“What?”

“That’s right.”

“What?”

“Yeah, exactly.”

“Huh?”

“You’ve got it!”

“Wait. Oh, fuck.” Bill groaned out a laugh, hiding his face behind his napkin. “Okay, yeah, yeah, I’m a dumbass.”

“As the kids would say, we been knew, himbo.”

“I’m not even going to begin to try to understand what you just said.”

“Probably for the best. Don’t want to work that peanut too hard, it might start burning.”

Bev let out a sudden loud bark of a laugh, startling Gertrude, who was now cuddled up to her chest, little feet positioned on her lap. “God, I missed you, Rich.”

Richie reached across the table to take her hands in his own. “It’s only been three months but those were three months too long, my love.”

“Careful, I think Eddie may be getting jealous,” Mike said.

“Eddie was jealous of a turkey when thirteen year old Richie paid too much attention to it,” Stan added. “He’s definitely getting jealous of his husband, a gay man, fake flirting with a taken woman.”

“Do you guys ever shut up?” Eddie asked, stabbing his fork into his slice of Mike’s pumpkin pie.

“You can’t make us shut up by kissing us like you can with Richie, so, no.” Stan took a sip from his glass of water, the perfect face of innocence.

Bill stood up then, leaving his slice of coconut cream half finished.

“Where you going, Kill Bill?” Richie asked.

“Bathroom. You still use one of those, right?”

“Every goddamn day.”

A minute later, Mike also stood up and moved to push in his chair. “I’m heading to the bathroom too, I think this wine is going directly to my bladder.”

“The perks of getting old. That and your dick stops working.”

“Jesus, Rich, I’m trying to eat here,” Eddie said.

“Yeah, well, you better get used to it. Soon enough the only thing going into your mouth will be that fork.”

“I will fucking kill you, don’t think it being a holiday will stop me.”

Mike excused himself from the room while the chaos of Richie and Eddie arguing over Richie’s dick continued over the table. Nearly thirty years later and the sound of them bickering remained the same, right down to the hitch of Eddie’s strained voice when Richie added flirting to the mix.

Soon, the argument evolved into the threat of a food fight, Richie holding a forkful of pumpkin pie filling ready to strike. Before he

could actually throw it, however, the filling dropped on its own accord right onto Eddie's pressed white sleeve.

"Richie! This is my favorite shirt!"

"Ah, shit, sorry Eds." For once, Richie sounded completely genuine in his apology. "I'll go get you a roll of paper towels."

"Get the hydrogen peroxide too. Shelf under the band aids." Eddie stared at the orange spot with the same kind of slight worry he directed at Gertrude when she took too long to start eating.

"Got it."

Richie headed down the hallway to the other side of the house, where there was a closet that held all of what Eddie labeled "household supplies." It was actually meant to be a second pantry with easy access to the living room, but the only thing that could have possibly resembled food in there was the vinegar Eddie used to make his own disinfectant spray to wipe down their kitchen counters.

But when Richie opened the pantry doors, the hydrogen peroxide was nowhere to be found. More specifically, it was hidden from view behind a pair of grown men in a passionate embrace, both of whom took barely any notice of Richie opening the doors until he let out a high-pitched scream.

Mike and Bill sprung apart, their mouths disconnected and their

hands immediately put into pockets as if they had anything left to hide.

“Holy fucking shit! I mean, it's about time, you motherfuckers! But give a guy some warning, I almost had a heart attack.”

Mike laughed quietly at Richie's outburst, but Bill stayed silent.

“How long has this been going on?” Richie asked, realizing that Bill's worrying thoughts were racing right across his face, clear as day.

“Uh, three minutes?” Mike offered.

“Damn. Well, congrats you two. I'll just uh, leave you to sort this out.” He moved to close the door, then suddenly yanked it back open. “Wait! I need the hydrogen peroxide, Eddie spilled something on his shirt. Or, well, I spilled something on his shirt. The shelf behind where you were making out, the one parallel to your asses?”

Mike reached behind Bill's hip to grab the bottle, handing it over to Richie.

“Thanks, amigo. And, uh, have fun. Stay safe and all that jazz. I told you where the condoms are if you need anything.”

And with that as his closing remark, Richie shut the door on two gaping faces.

“I think that went well,” he said to himself. “Good job, Richie. You pulled it off, not awkward in one bit.”

Gertrude appeared then, making her way toward Richie’s legs, as if she could sense the drama that was going down on this side of the house.

“Looks like you’re the only single bird here, Trudy. We should get you a boyfriend. Or a girlfriend! You want someone to cuddle with, someone in your own species? We could do that. Yeah, we could do that.”

Gertrude just huffed in response, which Richie took as a maybe.

“Yeah, I don’t blame you. It’s always scary letting someone else into your life like that. We can take it slow, maybe get you a girlfriend in a few years. I wonder what we’ll name her. What do you think of the name Mayzie?”

October 1994

Richie and Eddie were sat on the hood of Richie’s car parked by Derry’s river, just the two of them for once, Richie periodically taking breaths from a cigarette and Eddie trying not to inhale the smoke drifting around them. Mike and Stan had projects to finish, Ben was busy helping his mom, Bill was working, and Bev was still grounded for getting caught with her weed stash during the second week of school. It was weird without everyone else there. Richie and Eddie hadn’t been on their own since middle school it felt like, and it

showed in the way they kept glancing at each other then looking away, both anxious to not get caught.

The conversation had started on schoolwork, then drifted to bands, but somehow they ended up in silence. Neither was too keen to break it until something moved in their field of vision, wrenching them back to reality.

"Hey, look," Eddie said softly, nodding toward the empty parking lot. A female wild turkey trotted from one side to the other, her head bobbing slightly as she crossed the asphalt. "It's your girlfriend."

Richie squinted, pushing his glasses up his nose. "Holy shit, Hannah! I mean, Henrietta? Holly? Fuck, I know it started with an H..."

"Wow, you're such a fucking great boyfriend." Eddie cackled to himself, hiding it with the back of his hand.

"Oh wouldn't *you* like to know," Richie teased, slapping Eddie on the shoulder, one quick movement that startled them both.

"Rich..." Eddie's smile slipped, and he glanced down at Richie's lips before he could stop himself.

"...Yeah?" Richie dropped his cigarette without looking, caught in Eddie's stare, not even caring if the flame was completely stubbed out before it hit the ground.

But then Eddie shook his head, pasting a smile quickly back on as if the moment had never happened. “What’s with you and turkeys, man?”

“No, fuck that, what were you gonna say?”

“What-what do you mean—”

“What were you going to say? And don’t give me that ‘I don’t know what you’re talking about’ crap, because that’s bullshit and you know it.”

“I... I was just...” Eddie shook his head, trying to find the right words to fit the situation. His fingers flexed against the car’s metal hood, as if to push off and run if given the chance.

“Eddie. Please. I’m tired of this.” Richie leaned back until his body hit the windshield, covering his face with his hands. He looked the most serious Eddie had ever seen him in his entire life, which for some reason was so much more infuriating than seeing him joke around.

“Tired?” Eddie snapped. “Tired of what, asshole?”

Richie dragged the palms of his hands down his face. “I’m tired of us never being honest with each other, like whenever we talk we just can’t actually say shit. We’ve spent two hours in this fucking parking

lot and we haven't said one fucking word of truth. So yeah, fuck you, I'm fucking tired. Fuck!"

"You think I'm not honest with you?" Eddie said it like a challenge. In a way, to him, it was.

"Well you sure as hell aren't being honest with me right now!"

Eddie's sense of unbreaking loyalty bubbled its way to the surface. Questioning his sense of honor to his best friend was the final straw that broke him, sending his mouth off with absolutely no time to think over the possible consequences.

"You know what? Fine! You want to know what I think of you? You want to know why I feel like I can't talk to you, or be around you? It's because you're just so.... you! Everytime I'm near you it's like I can't just be sane, ever since we were kids it's always been you, it's always your stupid voice I can't stop listening to. And that makes me go absolutely fucking crazy! Do you know how annoying you are? Do you know how annoying it is to know you're annoying but also like that about you? I can't fucking stand you. I'm almost eighteen years old and I can't fucking stand being alone with you, because I can constantly hear my mothers voice in my head telling me that you're terrible for me and I should move on with my life and just settle down with some fucking girl and like I know, mom! But I love him so I fucking can't, and--"

Richie grabbed him mid-sentence and kissed him. And so there they were on the hood of his car, Richie laying across the windshield with Eddie pulled down to him, nearly ten years of pent-up energy spilling into this one kiss, the turkey in the parking lot forgotten in favor of each other's lips.

Eddie was shaking when Richie finally pulled away; he could barely keep himself upright. Thankfully, Richie's grip on his jacket remained tight to keep him steady. "I don't know what your thing is with turkeys, and frankly I don't care, because it's actually pretty fucking cute how much you love them."

"You know, to tell you the truth... I don't fucking know what it is either dude. I just really like turkeys."

"Yeah, that's how I feel about you."

Richie smiled and brought him back down for their second kiss of the night.

July 2019

"Attention! First class now boarding for Delta flight 5514 LAX to Miami, I repeat, first class now boarding for Delta flight 5514 LAX to Miami."

"That's us, Rich." Eddie nudged Richie and pointed up at the board, where it showed their flight was ready.

"Oh, great." Richie stood up, a leashed Gertrude in his arms, her beady eyes peering out from right underneath his armpit. "I was just about to sic Trudy on those kids over there."

The two kids in mention were currently singing their own rendition of Baby Shark while their parents completely ignored them.

“She’s not a guard dog, she doesn’t even bite.”

“I bet she would if I really wanted her to.”

“Okay, Mr. Turkey Trainer. Tell me how that goes.” Eddie had been the one to train Gertrude when they first got her, Richie designating himself as their personal cheerleader, offering only claps of support when Gertrude managed to remain still while Eddie walked away.

The two headed to the line for first class, Gertrude earning them quite a few second glances from their fellow passengers. When they got to the front of the line, the airline worker’s eyes bulged from her head and she almost dropped her permanent customer service smile.

“Um, sir, I don’t think you’re allowed your... turkey... on the plane.”

“Oh, no, she’s allowed. She’s a registered emotional support animal. Here are her papers.” Eddie handed over a tidy manila folder about an inch thick to the airline worker. “She’s up to date on all her vaccinations and has been cleared for domestic air travel. Notes on her typical public behavior are on page 12.”

“Okay, then. Everything does look in order here.” The woman gave

Eddie back the folder before scanning both their tickets. “Just make sure she stays calm throughout the flight. If there are any problems we may have to ask you to move her some place else.”

“Of course. She’ll be fine, she’s been on flights before.”

The airline worker looked as if she wasn’t sure whether this eased her concern or raised it. “Have a nice flight, then.”

The stares continued even after Richie and Eddie settled into their first class seats.

“I swear, everywhere we go we get those same dirty looks. She’s just a turkey! Yet Blondie over there with the yapping chihuahua gets no complaints.” Eddie glared at a women similar to their own age who was seated on the opposite side of the plane, whose dog, sporting a fluorescent green sweater, would not shut up.

“Hey, Trudy’s just a special little lady. People take a while to warm up to her.”

Eddie sighed. “I guess. I just think it’s unfair.”

“Want me to tweet my annoyance at Delta to my millions of adoring fans?” Richie held up his phone right in front of Eddie’s face. “They haven’t called for airplane mode yet.”

“I’m not letting you cancel a major airline just because they questioned our right to take a turkey on a plane.”

“I don’t know, could be fun,” Richie shrugged, offering a smile.

“Beep beep, Richie. Don’t even think about it.”

“No promises there. I’m dreaming up a world in which I sue Delta for emotional damages to both me and Trudy. We become billionaires. Trudy gets a diamond encrusted collar. Homelessness in America is ended. Kids finally learn about actual sex ed in schools and not from my Netflix specials.”

“You’re a dumbass. Here, take Trudy, maybe she can calm you down. You know, the reason we got her legally filed as an emotional support animal in the first place? Not just so we could take her on planes.”

“Oh, Troodles...” Richie said as he stroked her wing feathers. “The world doesn’t deserve us.”

“That it does not,” Eddie muttered under his breath. Their weekend getaway to see Mike and Bill in Florida was off to a great start.

September 2016

The fortune cookies from the restaurant were on all the Losers’ minds

as they headed off to bed that night. Immediately after returning to the inn, Richie entered his room, grabbed a bottle of whiskey from his suitcase, then walked back out. Eddie's door across the hall opened at the noise of his shutting.

"Where are you going?" Eddie had just gotten back as well, but somehow he was already wearing red checkered pajama bottoms and an old T-shirt advertising a half marathon in NYC. He looked absolutely adorable, which Richie definitely did not take notice of.

"A walk. A drink." Richie held up the bottle as if showing off a trophy, one hand around the neck and the other flat underneath its bottom. "Fuck if I know, I just can't be here right now."

"Give me a minute." Eddie nodded, as if this made perfect sense to anyone not inside his head.

"Huh?"

"I'm coming with you."

And so here they were a half hour later, walking down Derry's waterfront with a top shelf bottle of whiskey clutched between them, Eddie back in his dark denim jeans and a polo.

"Haven't seen one of those in a while," Richie said, pointing out to the river with his non-bottle hand, where a group of female wild turkeys pecked at the ground.

“Holy shit, I remember you used to like--seduce them?” Eddie turned to Richie for confirmation.

“Hell yeah, I seduced them. Successfully, might I add.”

“You still kissing turkeys, Mr. Tozier?”

The dimple in Eddie’s cheek made Richie trip over his own feet. When they were kids, it was just something cute, but now? It was something to die for. He swallowed thickly in an attempt to clear his dry throat. “Nah, gave that up a while ago. No turkeys out west.”

“Shame. Bet you’re missing them since nobody else will give you the time of day.”

“ *Ouch* , Kaspbrak,” Richie said, frowning when Eddie flinched. “What? You take your wife’s name or something? Don’t go by Kaspbrak no more?”

Eddie shook his head. “No, just, you’ve never called me that before.”

“Well you never used to let me call you Eds.”

Eddie fixed his stare on the bottle in Richie’s hands. “What if I let you? Call me Eds?”

“Do you want me to?” Richie meant for the question to come out jokingly, but the note of hopefulness in his voice betrayed him.

Eddie ripped his gaze from the bottle to look Richie in the eye.
“Yeah. I do”

“Well, then, Eds... how do you feel about whiskey? Or does your wife tell you you’re allergic to that too?”

“God, pass the bottle. And don’t talk about my wife.”

Richie passed the bottle his way and Eddie immediately took a drink.
“Sorry, didn’t mean to insult your woman there.”

“No, Rich, I just really don’t want to think about her.”

“Trouble in paradise?”

Eddie laughed harshly after another particularly long swig. “Paradise. Now that’s some bullshit.”

“You know, if you don’t like your wife maybe you shouldn’t have married her.” Richie stuffed his empty hands in the pockets of his jacket, shrugging his shoulders up to meet his ears.

“Damn, dude, are you always this honest?”

“No. Just with you.” But Richie looked awkward as he said it, avoiding Eddie’s gaze.

Eddie narrowed his eyes at him and set the bottle down on the ground. “You remember something, don’t you?”

“Do you?” Classic Richie, avoiding the question by reversing it on the other person.

“Shit, man, I’m remembering tons of things, but something tells me you remember something else.”

Richie picked up the bottle from where Eddie had placed it, wrapping his lips around the stem before knocking it back much like he did with the shot at the restaurant, just this time with hands. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand after he swallowed. “It’s not exactly something I can tell you, Eds.”

“Oh, fuck that,” Eddie said, trying to smack the bottle out of Richie’s hands but failing. “Don’t give me that crap.”

Suddenly Richie’s hand was shaking around the bottle, and he couldn’t keep in his laugh.

“What the fuck, man? Something funny?” But the way Eddie tried to appear macho and ready to fight only made Richie laugh even harder.

“You sound exactly like me on that night,” Richie said, wiping the tears from his eyes.

“What night?”

“The fall of our senior year. There was one night where it was just the two of us hanging out, everyone else couldn’t make it.” Richie trailed off, teeth gnawing at his lower lip as he questioned whether to continue.

“Well? What happened?”

Richie swallowed dryly and set the bottle back down on the ground.
“We kissed.”

“Oh.” That was all Eddie could manage to say before his thoughts hit a brick wall.

Richie looked up at Eddie nervously, his eyes darting from the ground to his face, trying to gauge his reaction. “Disappointed by that?”

“No, just--give me a minute. Kinda need to process the fact that those

little parts of me that were always saying ‘you know what, maybe pussy isn’t it’ were right.”

“Oh shit, you actually thought you were straight.”

“What, you thought I married a woman just for fun?” Eddie laughed, but there was no humor in it.

“Well, no.”

“Because it certainly isn’t any fun.”

The look on Eddie’s face just about broke Richie’s heart. “Shit, man, I...”

“Yeah. Now pass me the fucking bottle again. Myra never lets me drink this shit at home.”

After taking another long and hearty sip, Eddie turned to Richie, a determined glint in his eye.

“So was it good?” he asked.

“Huh?”

“The kiss,” Eddie clarified. “Was it any good?”

“Well, I mean, I guess.”

“You *guess* ?” Eddie scoffed, hurt laced behind it. “Wow, okay. Damn.”

“Well, dude, it was my first kiss. And it’s not like I have anything to compare it to.”

“Okay, mine too. Wait--what?”

Richie shuffled in place, a blush creeping its way up his neck. “It’s been a dry... few decades.”

“I’m the only person you’ve ever kissed?” Eddie asked incredulously.

Richie shrugged, taking another sip from the bottle. “It’s not that big of a deal, man. I was repressed. Didn’t really have time to make out with every guy in LA’s gay scene.”

“Yeah, but like, not even a woman?”

“Never wanted to.”

“Neither did I.” Eddie chose not to get into exactly why he did, then, get himself into a situation where he regularly had to kiss a woman. “So twenty-some years and you haven’t been kissed since?”

“You know, you don’t really have to keep repeating it,” Richie said through clenched teeth.

“Wait, so are you like, a forty-year old virgin too?”

“What? No! I’ve fucked guys before, but... I don’t know. Kissing was just never on the table.”

“Why not?” Eddie continued to prod.

“I guess I only ever wanted to kiss one person,” Richie pushed out, the truth finally dangling before them like bait on a wire, waiting for someone to reach out and catch it.

“Oh.” Eddie took this in as Richie glanced between him and the bottle with nervous breaths. “Oh.”

He began to pace back and forth on the grass, spinning the gold band around his left ring finger around and around with every step. After a few back and forths, he stopped, facing the river and looking out at it with a stern glare. Suddenly, he yanked the ring off and threw it into

the water. The ring sailed in a perfect arc before splashing down into the rapids of the Kenduskeag, quickly sinking down to settle in the mud at the bottom.

“What the fuck did you do that for?” Richie’s head bobbed between the river and Eddie, legs stretched as if he was willing to jump in and swim until he found it if only Eddie asked.

Eddie met his flabbergasted stare head on. “You’re the only person I’ve ever wanted to kiss too.”

“You’re fucking married, dude!”

“Yeah, and if I hadn’t forgotten you, I fucking wouldn’t be. So due to the extenuating circumstances of an alien clown fucking with my mind, I’m allowed to do this.”

Eddie marched up to Richie and took his face in his hands, letting the weight settle in his palm before he leaned up and captured Richie’s lips in between his own. It was much different from their first kiss, and their second. For one, they could both grow beards now, the stubble on each of their chins creating a friction that was somehow both terrible and weirdly hot. And though Eddie had spent all those years kissing someone he never truly loved, he did learn a thing or two.

When Eddie stepped back to draw in a breath, Richie moved forward and reconnected them without a moment’s hesitation. Eddie laughed into the kiss, making Richie laugh as well, and then they weren’t kissing anymore, but laughing into each other’s open mouths at the

absurdity of it all.

It had been twenty-two years and they couldn't get enough of each other. So they took what they could, for now, and silently promised to follow each other home later.

September 2020

"And here we have the star of the show himself, Richie Tozier, walking down the red carpet with his husband and... is that a turkey?"

Richie rushed toward the journalist, Gertrude's leash in hand with her waddling alongside him at a frantic pace. "Why, yes, she is a turkey! Thank you for noticing. Her name is Gertrude and she's three years young."

"Wow!" The journalist turned to the camera, sending a wink to the audience. "I thought I'd seen the weirdest pets celebrities had to offer."

"Turkeys aren't actually that weird," Eddie said, leaning down to speak into the microphone. "It's like owning a chicken, just smarter and about a thousand times more impatient. And where we grew up, owning a chicken was pretty much just as weird as owning a dog."

The journalist ignored his matter-of-fact tone in favor of latching onto the detail at the end. "Aww, you guys grew up together?"

“Just a two minute bike ride away,” Richie said, throwing his non-leash arm around Eddie’s shoulders. Eddie sighed, but nonetheless settled into Richie’s hold.

“How long have you been together?” the journalist asked.

Several phrases went through both of their minds. *Three years. Twenty-five. Forever.*

“Well, I’ve been his since the first day I laid eyes on him.” Richie said, saving the day. “Saw him in kindergarten with his little polo shirts and packed lunches and said to myself ‘That right there, that’s my future husband.’”

“And were you the same?” The journalist turned to Eddie, holding out the microphone expectantly.

“Uh, yeah. I didn’t know it at the time, but deep down, it was always him.”

“How sweet. And did you two always know you wanted to adopt a turkey?”

“Oh, definitely!” Richie said, leaning down to pick up Gertrude for the camera. She puffed herself up in Richie’s arms, as if she knew she was being watched from all over the world. “Second to Eddie

Spaghetti here, turkeys are the love of my life.”

The journalist laughed in surprise while Eddie facepalmed. “Stop telling people you’re in love with turkeys. Please.”

“Well, thanks for talking with me! I just love you and your wild little family.” She turned back to the camera. “And this has been Justine with E! We’ll be back in a bit to see what else the Emmys red carpet brings us.”

Richie and Eddie walked off, hand in hand, the leash held between them and Gertrude trailing their steps. A few camera flashes went off to capture the moment.

The next day, Eddie woke to a hundred and sixty-four texts from the Losers group chat. Over thirty of them linked to news articles about the night before.

“Richie Tozier and Eddie Kaspbrak won cutest couple at the Emmys by a landslide.”

“Does your man love you like a turkey? Might be time to drop him.”

“Here’s why a domesticated turkey is the hottest new pet since chinchillas.”

“A beginner’s guide to owning a turkey, Hollywood style.”

And Eddie's personal favorite: "*Gertrude McFuzz voted best dressed overall on the red carpet.*"

"Yeah, she was, wasn't she?" Eddie smiled down at his phone, scrolling through the texts of Gertrude's most adoring fans. Second to Richie and Eddie themselves, of course. No one loved her like they did.

Eddie looked over at Richie, where he lay sleeping with his arms cuddled around a golden Emmy award. Yeah, he had won it. And then immediately gotten kicked off of the stage for saying "Here's to all the fucking turkey lovers!" on national television in his acceptance speech, Gertrude tucked under one arm and the award under the other.

His husband had problems, sure, and he had a weird lifelong love for turkeys. But he loved him. And sometimes, when you love someone, you end up loving everything they do too.

"You know, getting Trudy might've been the best thing we ever did," Eddie said when Richie started to stir.

"Oh definitely, second to me fucking your mom."

Eddie grabbed a pillow and hit him over the head with it, bringing Richie to sudden complete awakeness.

“You really want to start that fight?” Richie grabbed a pillow of his own, holding it cautiously before him as a shield.

“Bring it, old man.” Eddie hit him again in the chest before jumping off the bed, running to the hallway.

“That’s Emmy award winning old man to you!”

Richie chased Eddie down the hallway and then down the stairs, all the way to the living room where Gertrude stood in the fenced off section where she slept during the hotter nights. At the sound of two full-grown men stumbling downstairs, she awoke with an irritated squawk.

“Trudy! Protect me!” Richie jumped into her enclosure, crouching down to hide behind her, which made quite the sight seeing as he was over six feet tall and she was, well, a turkey.

“That’s not fair and you know it,” Eddie said, stopping outside the enclosure.

“Truce?” Richie asked through heavy breaths.

“Fine. But get out of there, you’re making her scared.”

Richie complied, leaving Gertrude with a pat on her head before

stepping back over the fence. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to--”

Eddie hit Richie square in the face with his pillow.

“I thought we said truce!”

“That was for making the your mom joke. Now we’re even.”

“You’re an evil genius,” Richie said, shaking his head in disbelief. “I love you so much.”

“I know,” Eddie said, smiling as he dropped his pillow to the ground and moved in for a kiss. “I love you too.”

Before their lips could meet, Gertrude chirped, prompting both Richie and Eddie to turn to her.

“I think that was turkey language for ‘I love you guys too,’” Richie said.

“You know what? I’m starting to think you’re half turkey. It would explain why you love them so much.” Eddie laughed to himself, stopping only when he saw that familiar look of guilt and glee on Richie’s face which meant he was about to say something Eddie definitely did not want to hear.

“So, how does it feel to be a turkey fucker, then?” Richie bolted for the kitchen before Eddie could even pick up his pillow again.

“Feels fucking great, asshole!” Eddie screamed to his back as it disappeared beyond the hallway, shaking his head when he heard Richie laughing maniacally from the kitchen. This man was the love of his life, and he was going to enjoy every bad joke of his until the day he died.